



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

GEORGE J. PROAKIS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING DIVISION
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

**STEP 2: DETERMINATION OF PREFERABLY PRESERVED
STAFF REPORT**

Site: 27 Allen Street

Case: HPC.DMO 2021.03

Applicant: 19-27 Allen Street, LLC

Owner: Jean Martelli

Proposal: *Demolish principal structure.*

HPC Meeting Date: March 16, 2021



The purpose of a staff report is to provide the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) with additional information and professional assessments regarding properties that are proposed for demolition. These assessments are based on the criteria allowed for consideration by the HPC in accordance with the Demolition Review Ordinance (DRO). A Staff Report is not a determination/decision nor does it constitute authorization in any form.

I. SUMMARY OF FEBRUARY 16, 2021 MEETING

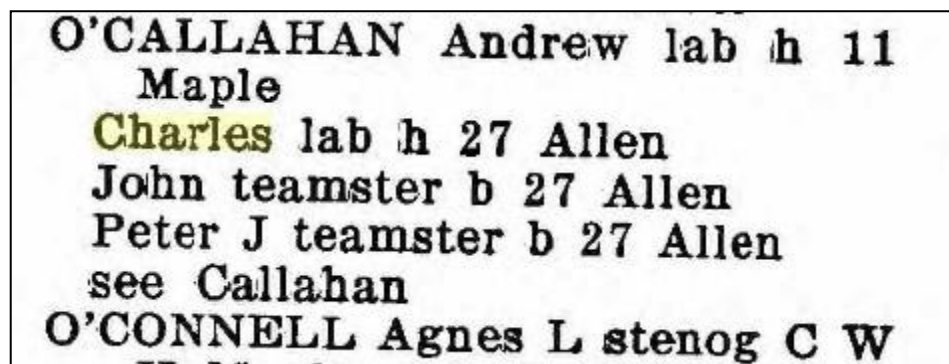
At their regular public meeting on February 16, 2021, the HPC voted the structure at 27 Allen Street to be “Historically Significant”. Due to this determination, 27 Allen Street moved on to the second step in the demolition review process, which calls for the HPC to determine whether or not the building should be “Preferably Preserved”. A determination of “preferably preserved” does not permanently halt demolition of a structure.

II. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional historic research reveals that Charles O'Callahan, the owner of 21-23 Allen Street later owned and lived in 27 Allen Street. This information was noted in the Preferably Preserved staff report for 21-23 Allen Street. It is unclear if O'Callahan himself was the builder of the structure at 27 Allen Street. Given that the property was devoid of *residential* structures¹ for at least the last half of the 19th century, it is entirely possible that O'Callahan himself built the existing residential structure at the beginning of the 20th century.

O'Callahan appears in the 1906 City Directory as the owner of and living at 27 Allen Street. John and Peter O'Callahan are now both Teamsters and boarding (paying for a room and meals) at 27 Allen Street. As is seen with the 21-23 Allen Street reports, these individuals have lived together for many years, moving between the 21-23 Allen properties and now 27 Allen multiple times.

Below: 1906 City Directory. Charles O'Callahan is the owner of the property.



The 1907 City Directory shows the O'Callahans living at 27 Allen Street still with the ownership/boarding situation remaining the same as in 1906. O'Callahan's wife, Rose is no longer listed as she passed away in 1904.

¹ The **1874** and **1884** Hopkins maps (see Historic Significance staff reports for 21-23Allen and 27 Allen) showed *outbuildings* barns/stables) but no residential structures. The **1895** Bromley map (see Historic Significance staff reports for 21-23Allen and 27 Allen) showed *outbuildings* barns/stables) that these outbuildings had been removed and the parcel was vacant.

Below: 1907 City Directory

O'CALLAHAN Andrew lab h 11
Maple
Charles lab h 27 Allen
John teamster b 27 Allen
Peter J teamster b 27 Allen
see Callahan
O'CONNELL Agnes L stenog C W

Though the following information regarding the O'Callahans appears in the staff report for 21-23 Allen Street, because 27 Allen Street is a separate property and is a separate case application for demolition Staff repeats the O'Callahan information again here:

Charles O'Callahan was born in Ireland around 1854. His presence on Allen Street fits with the significant Irish immigrant presence in this area during the second half of the 19th century.

It appears that, until the end of his life, O'Callahan worked as a laborer as did many of the residents of the area at this time. The life of a laborer was a difficult one; the work was hard, often dangerous, the hours long and the wages low. A laborer did not have a steady job but changed every few weeks or months. A laborer might work a few months helping to dig a canal, fill in a river, lay and repair rail lines, work as further "unskilled" labor in many of the numerous plants and factories in the area. That Charles O'Callahan, as a laborer, was able to purchase property was no small feat.

The last year of his life O'Callahan was a grocer; to-date no record has been found that he owned a grocery business. Therefore, he may have worked in a grocery owned by another individual. From the period of 1895 until his death in 1909, O'Callahan and his family members rotated among the three structures on 21-23 Allen Street. As seen in the staff report for 27 Allen Street, O'Callahan at one time owned that building as well, domiciling there for a short period of time.

O'Callahan died in 1909.

MARGIN RESERVED FOR BINDING RECORDS
FILL OUT WITH INK—THIS IS A PERMANENT RECORD
ALL NAMES TO BE IN FULL

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
CITY OF SOMERVILLE

RETURN OF A DEATH

77 J

FULL NAME Charles O'Callahan Registered No. 372
Place of Death 23 Allen street Somerville Date of Death April 29, 1909
(Name of Hospital or Institution if any) (No.) (Street)
Place of Residence 23 Allen St., Somerville, Mass. Age 55 years 2 months — days
(No.) (Street) (Town or City and State)

STATISTICAL DETAILS			PHYSICIAN'S CERTIFICATE	
SEX <u>male</u>	COLOR <u>white</u>	SINGLE, MARRIED, WIDOWED, OR DIVORCED <u>married</u>	I HEREBY CERTIFY that I attended deceased during last illness, from Jan. <u>1909</u> to April <u>29, 1909</u> , that to the best of my knowledge and belief death occurred on the date stated above, and that the CAUSE OF DEATH was as follows: (If a soldier or sailor who served in the war of the rebellion both the primary and contributory causes of death must be given.) Primary: <u>Pernicious Anaemia</u> <u>about 1 1/2</u> years (DURATION) DAYS Contributory: <u>Gastritis</u> (SIGNED) <u>Edward J. Dailey</u> M.D. (Address) <u>5 Summer</u> <u>Somerville</u> (No.) (Street) (Town or City) SPECIAL INFORMATION only for Hospitals, Institutions, Transients, or Recent Residents. Previous Residence _____ How long at _____ Years _____ Months _____ Days Place of Death? _____ Where was disease contracted, if not at place of death? _____ Received <u>April 30, 1909</u> Wm. P. Mitchell Agent of Board of Health, appointed to issue burial permits Filed <u>April 30, 1909</u> City Clerk	
MARRIAGE NAME If a married or divorced woman, or widow				
HUSBAND'S FULL NAME				
BIRTHPLACE Give state or country; also city, town, or county, if known <u>Ireland</u>				
NAME OF FATHER <u>John O'Callahan</u>				
BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER Give state or country; also city, town, or county, if known <u>Ireland</u>				
MARRIAGE NAME OF MOTHER <u>Ann Welsh</u>				
BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER Give state or country; also city, town, or county, if known <u>Ireland</u>				
OCCUPATION <u>Grocer</u>				
INFORMANT'S NAME Person giving statistical details <u>Mary O'Callahan</u>				
ADDRESS <u>23 Allen St., Somerville</u> (No.) (Street) (Town or City)				
PLACE OF BURIAL OR REMOVAL <u>Holy Cross</u> (Cemetery) <u>Malden, Mass.</u> (Town or City, and State)				
DATE OF BURIAL <u>May 1, 1909</u>				
UNDERTAKER'S NAME <u>William A. Flaherty</u>				
ADDRESS <u>261 Washington St., Somerville</u> (No.) (Street) (Town or City)				

Above: Charles O'Callahan death certificate, 1909.

III. DETERMINATION

The HPC must determine one of the following:

- a. That the building is Preferably Preserved.
- b. That the building is not Preferably Preserved.
- c. That the building is not Preferably Preserved *with Conditions*.

See the following section IV “Findings” for guidance.

IV. FINDINGS

a. Preferably Preserved

For a determination of *preferably preserved*, the HPC must make the following finding:

- *That the demolition of the building at 27 Allen Street would be detrimental to the architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social heritage of the City.*

If the HPC makes the above finding in the affirmative or the negative, the HPC must state their reasons why they take either position.

b. Not Preferably Preserved

For a determination of *NOT preferably preserved*, the HPC must state their reasons why they take their position.

c. Not Preferably Preserved with Conditions

For a determination of *NOT preferably preserved with Conditions*, the HPC must make the following finding:

- *That the building at 27 Allen Street does not meet any of the criteria listed under item “a”*

- AND -

- *That the applicant is required to provide one or more of the following to the Planning Division (Preservation Planning) prior to demolition:*

- 1. photographic documentation of the building to be demolished;*
- 2. architectural renderings of the building to be demolished;*
- 3. identification of materials for salvage of material; and/or,*
- 4. a plan for installation of historic or interpretive signage at or near the site.*

If the HPC makes the above finding, the HPC must state their reasons why they take their position.

V. VOTE

When bringing the matter to a vote, the HPC must include the reasons why the structure at **27 Allen Street** is or is not “preferably preserved”.